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Black Man

and . . .

The War.

Cape Town:

THE SOUTH AFRICAN VIGILANCE COMMITTEE.

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# THE BLACK MAN

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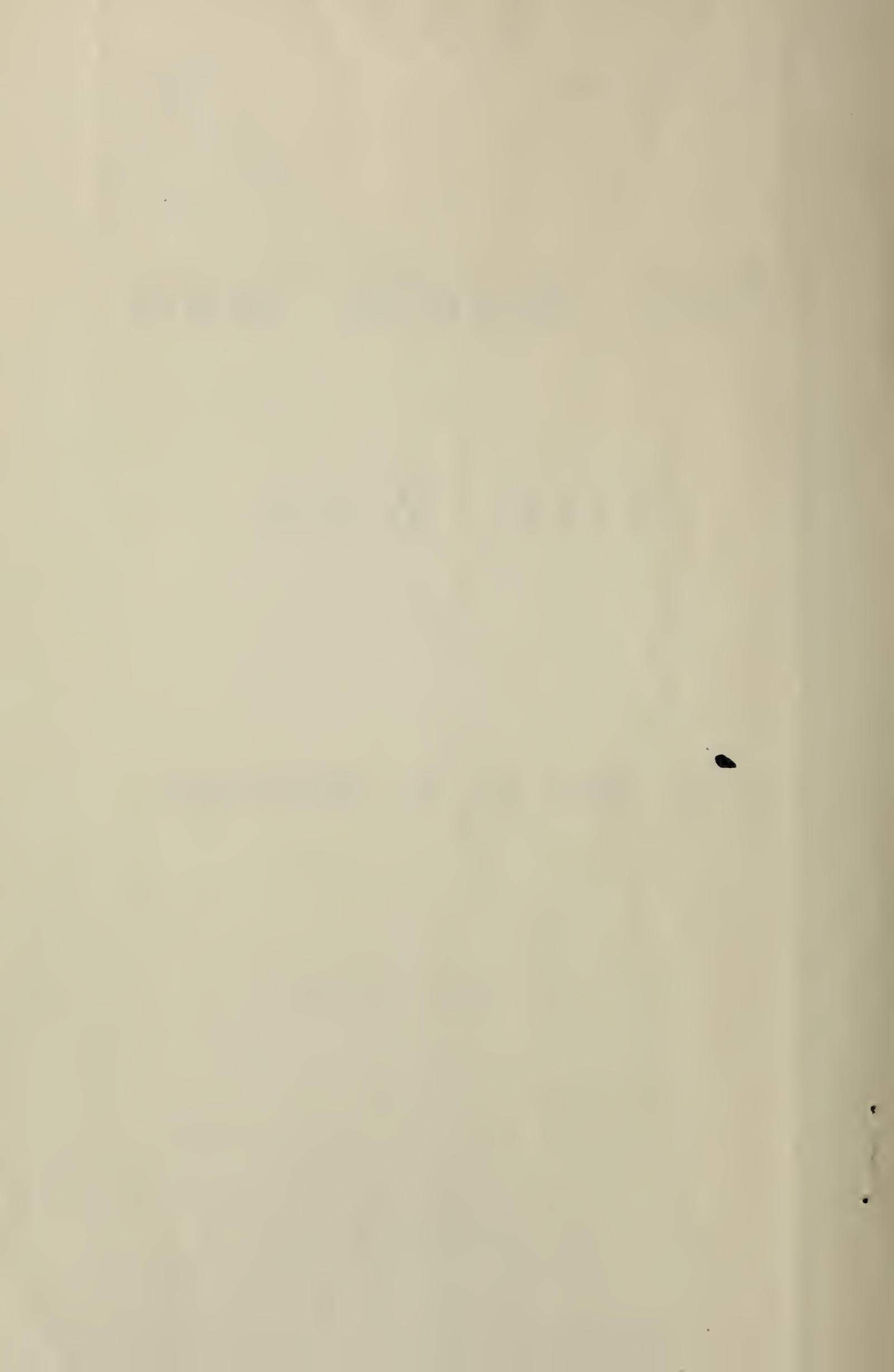
# THE WAR.

BY

The Rev. J. S. MOFFAT.

CAPE TOWN :

THE SOUTH AFRICAN VIGILANCE COMMITTEE.



# THE BLACK MAN AND THE WAR.

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When the American civil war broke out nearly forty years ago, the question uppermost in men's minds was that of State rights. There were points on which the internal rights claimed by individual States clashed with the general law of the American Republic. In consequence, certain states determined to secede from the Union and to declare their independence. Hence we now think and speak of that memorable conflict as the War of Secession. The instinct of the American people as a whole, taught them that way led to ruin, and the whole resources of the Union were taxed to the uttermost in defence of the commonwealth, one and indivisible, with what results we know.

But after the conflict had for a time raged fiercely another question began to assert itself, the question which really lay underneath the whole history of the relations between North and South, the question of slavery. That was really the basis on which the war was being fought, though for a time other and merely technical points had been raised, and had obscured the main issue. According to the Constitution all men were to be free and equal. The larger half of the Union had acted upon this fundamental principle, the lesser half ignored it. So it had come about, that there was nothing for it but to decide whether the Southern States were to dominate the whole Union on the basis of slavery as an acknowledged "corner stone." To quote the language of the time "The irrepressible nigger would insist on coming to the surface and demanding attention."

Abraham Lincoln with the eye of a seer, led the way to the heart of the matter, and proclaimed as a constitutional amendment that slavery was a fatal blot that must be wiped away for ever as an institution in the United States. From that moment of prophetic decision the issues were clear, and though some hard fighting still remained to be done, the Union began to see the dawn, and found the way out of her darkest night into the broad sunlight of true freedom.



There is a curious likeness between the circumstances of that time and our own. Many people will tell us that this is the war of the Franchise, a matter of mere trifling electoral details, and according to the trend of their sympathies they will blame President Kruger on the one hand, or Sir Alfred Milner and Mr. Chamberlain on the other, for forcing the two powers into an unnatural and unjustifiable conflict over a mere bagatelle. But such people lose sight of the fact that there are lines of cleavage in South Africa that go deeper than any question that was raised at the Bloemfontein Conference or even than the general attitude of Boer and Uitlander in Johannesburg. There never has been a time in the history of the century at which the Briton and the Boer in South Africa have not been at variance on two questions, regular taxation and the status of the native. To quote Edouard Naville, speaking of the Transvaal in regard to the levying of taxes, "the Boer is an out-and-out rebel. His doctrine in the matter of finance is that tribute must be exacted only from the alien; this belief along with the rest of his religion being taken from the Old Testament." The difficulty about taxation may be got over, especially when the Boer finds as he generally does that wherever the British flag flies every man has a chance not only to live but even to prosper.

The native problem goes deeper and is more difficult to deal with. The British notion of the aboriginal man as a man with all human rights has been a standing occasion of offence to the Boer ever since the Union Jack has floated in South Africa. The Boer looks upon the Black as a "schepsel," not as a man. He may have a right to kindly treatment, like a horse, but legal rights as a human being, No! Some people do not see the far-reaching results of this distinction. They ignore the fact that in the lands between Cape Town and the Zambesi, apart from German and Portuguese territory, for the eight hundred thousand Europeans there are upwards of four million of blacks, showing no sign of decadence, increasing as fast as we are, and learning from us some good and much evil. If we shut our eyes to these facts and make no provision for their natural results, the black men will some day overflow us as the flood overflowed the contemporaries of Noah. Some such catastrophe will be the sure result of any attempt to keep the black man in a servile condition. He will be a destructive or a conservative force in the Commonwealth just in proportion as we withhold or as we give him his rights as a man. As long as there are two rival powers in South

Africa divided by a line like this, divided by a fundamental difference of opinion and of practice on one of the vital principles of human life, there is a certainty of collision. The deep underlying antagonism is there and must assert itself sooner or later, as it has done now.

That there is no exaggeration in speaking of the native question as one of the principal causes which have led to the present war, we see at once if we only look at the present state of the controversy. The longer the war goes on, the greater is the disposition shown to bring the native question to the front. It is urged by those on the British side, that this war will if successful place the native in the Transvaal in a far better position : and that Boer predominance would mean to the native a condition of permanent inferiority and servitude. Those whom we have as a matter of distinctness to call pro-Boer devote much energy throughout the English press, to show that the condition of the natives in the Cape Colony for instance is little, if at all, better there under British rule than it has been under Boer rule in the Transvaal. One of the most remarkable statements that has appeared is in the manifesto signed by a body of the most influential ministers and theological professors of the Dutch Reformed Church. They contend not only that there is a better understanding between Boer and Black Man than there is between Black and British, but that the Dutch Reformed has always been a missionary church in South Africa, and is so at the present time in a greater degree than any other. It is out of the question to attribute to these Reverend Fathers any wilful intention to mislead by saying the thing that is not, the only other supposition possible is, that they are profoundly ignorant of the past history of South Africa and of things as they are at the present moment.

Take a case in point—the relative position of the natives in the Cape Colony, and in the Transvaal. The Reverend Charles Phillips, formerly of Graaff-Reinet, now a refugee from Johannesburg, has stated the case so concisely and yet so clearly that I make no apology for taking over the whole passage. “To come to the fundamental policy of the two Governments, the essential principles as embodied in their laws, which regulate their relations to their coloured subjects, no one dare affirm that the natives are not treated worse in the Transvaal than in Cape Colony. The difference begins with the “Grondwet,” or Constitution itself :

1st. In its ninth article it is affirmed that there shall be absolutely “no equality, either in Church or State,



between white and coloured." The natives are the "zwart goed," black goods or property, the schepsels, mere creatures, the Gibeonites, to be used as the "hewers of wood and drawers of water" for the white people.

- 2nd. They may not walk on the side paths or occupy other than the trucks or carriages on the railway specially built for them.
- 3rd. They may not engage in any kind of trading, such as hucksters or costermongers. No licence could be obtained even by an educated and respectable coloured man for the purpose.
- 4th. In the land formerly their own, from which they were expelled or subjugated by a gigantic raid, they may not own even a foot of land.
- 5th. Till two years ago there never was such a thing as a legal marriage among coloured people. When it was granted, lest it should be thought that there was the shade of equality at the hymeneal altar, the preamble introduces the 9th Article of the Grondwet, quoted above. It then insisted upon a fee of £3 to the Government, and so hedged it round with other restrictions as to put a premium on immorality, insomuch that all branches of the Christian Church sent deputations to Pretoria, and worked desperately for its abolition, preferring the old condition of things.
- 6th. A maximum is done for the education of every Boer child ; a minimum for every Uitlander child ; nothing whatever for the native child. Yet all contribute to the revenue. The native 3 per cent., the Boer  $7\frac{1}{2}$  cent., the Uitlander  $89\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., so that the anomalous condition exists that the native helps to educate the Boer child, but gets nothing in return.
- 7th. It is difficult to compress into a paragraph the iniquitous working of the Pass Law. Each native through his "Baas" must pay two shillings for a pass, and wear a metal badge on his left arm above the elbow. But many in the times of depression during the last two years were often out of work. Now no work meant no "Baas," no Baas, no pass, no pass, imprisonment or fine, at one time up to £10. The maximum penalty allowed by the law was only



£5, but the limitations of law were only a small thing where the native was concerned.

“With the Cape coloured people it was still worse. Some of them were educated and had learned to become painters, tailors, masons, saddlers, shoemakers. Now white men often refused to work with them. Hence they were compelled to seek small contracts themselves. But being their own masters they could not get a pass ; and yet day by day they were thrown into prison, seized on their way to or from church, chased from street into street, hunted in their own bedrooms and their houses, and raided even at midnight for non-compliance with an impossible law. Your readers may find a dozen despatches in a recent Blue Book on this subject alone.

“In one respect it may be said the Transvaal has an advantage over the Cape. There is a prohibitory Liquor Law for natives, and if the law were properly enforced, it would have been an unspeakable boon. But of what value is ‘prohibition that does not prohibit’? Now the law is evaded by a process of bribery and corruption to such an extent that there has been far more drunkenness among the natives of the Transvaal than of the Cape. Over 100,000 natives were labouring at the mines, and of these it has been computed that 25,000 at least were daily incapacitated by drink from performing the duties for which they were engaged. Surely a lamentable condition of things. A process, it may be described, for changing savages into devils.

“Now, for the sake of comparison, consider the condition of things at the Cape :

1. The Constitution of the country allows no difference whatever, either in Church or State, on account of colour.
2. The natives can walk where they like.
3. Can trade on the same conditions as Boer and British.
4. Can own land to the full extent of his purchasing power.
5. Can marry by the marriage law, which applies to all classes alike, and without paying any fee to the Government.
6. Can obtain a grant for every properly conducted school. I myself at one time had seven such in the

Cape Colony under my charge, not one of which could have been kept open apart from the Government grant.

7. But what is more important still, they have the franchise on the same conditions as the Whites. Sir A. Milner asked far less at the Bloemfontein Conference for the Uitlanders than is freely granted to the natives in the Cape Colony. So numerous are their votes that they in reality hold the balance of power. Mr. (Cronwright) Schreiner says the Dutch at the Cape have the Kafirs with them. It is true they succeeded in procuring the support of Tengo Jabavu, and his Kafir paper, the "Imvo" of the last election. But another Kafir paper and its supporters were found on the Progressive side. But though he maintains that the Boers are in a large majority in the Cape Colony even with their Kafir allies, they failed to secure a majority of votes at the last election. And it may be safely said that the party will succeed at the next election in gaining a majority which is able to win the native vote.

"Now it will be manifest that no party dare be guilty of seriously unjust enactments against the natives, lest they lose their votes at the next election. They have thus secured what Sir A. Milner asked for the Uitlanders, power to protect themselves, and secure the redress of their own grievances.

"Now, Sir, will any man, after reading the above, affirm that the "natives are treated with as much severity in the Cape Colony, as in the Transvaal." And it is in the light of such facts that the manifesto of the Dutch Reformed Church should be read."

So far Mr. Phillips. With one or two unimportant errors of details in paragraph 7, about the last Cape election, he presents us with a truthful and most forcible contrast built up of hard facts. Every one knows too well that there are anomalies in the administration of justice to the native in the Cape Colony. We have only to call to mind an instance which is fresh in the public memory of what occurred the other day at Swellendam. Things of this kind give rise to searchings of heart as to whether the system of trial by jury does not need to be modified in its application to natives in South Africa. Then there is the lamentable condition of the



Langeberg prisoners of war indentured to compulsory service for five years among the Dutch farmers of the Western Province, and left to the irresponsible tender mercies of their masters with no shadow of Government inspection or oversight : a matter which will not bear looking into too closely.

But these things are anomalies, they are contrary to the spirit of Cape Colonial Law. The Charter of Justice, with the Government Ordinances, on which our whole legal system works in the Cape Colony, stands four square. Its spirit is noble, it gives to every man, whatever the colour of his face, the right to be a free citizen, and a chance to attain any position in the community which is open to honest intelligence and industry. And whence did that spirit come ? It certainly did not emanate from those who were the dwellers in the land, nor from their tyrannical masters, when Great Britain took possession of the Cape. It came from the old country which was just then awaking to a larger conception of true civil and political freedom.

The Transvaal Grondwet on the other hand, which Mr. Phillips quotes, is a worthy exponent of the narrow, reactionary spirit of the Boer and of those who have pandered to his ignorance. The oppressive enactments by which the native in the Transvaal is to be kept down in a position of inferiority and servitude are not anomalies like some of the things in the Cape Colony we deplore and are ashamed of, they are the natural outcome of the spirit of the Grondwet, and they tell us truly what the attitude of the Boer will be towards the native wherever he has his own way. COLONIAL

The Reverend authors of the manifesto tell us that the Dutch Reformed Church is not, and never has been, unwilling to give the gospel to the Black man. Yes and No ! Certainly not so far as these particular ministers are personally concerned. They have given an honourable example struggling successfully as they have done to rouse in their own church missionary zeal. They have worked hard and well, and they have done good work. No one will grudge them that testimony who is a well-wisher to the Native. But it would seem as if while absorbed in this effort, and in the joy of its success within the range of their own observation they had quite forgotten what is the real attitude of the vast majority of the adherents of the Dutch Reformed Church. That can only be understood by those in such regions as the Transvaal and its borders, who in their missionary efforts have found their path crossed, their



labours retarded, their successes crushed by the undying hostility of the Boer. There are many Boers, good Christian men, who are zealous and willing to give their native dependants a sort of Christian teaching, but it is doubtful whether even these would allow that teaching to take a direction which would give progressive advancement to the native in status and education. Yet these are some of the results without which the missionary's work remains incomplete.

We need not go beyond the Cape Colony to know how bitterly the Boer resents the education of the Black man. It was only lately and within sight of Table Mountain that I listened to a Dutch lady who laid down with almost vehement conviction the following exposition of her views:—"Education of the coloured people was no use, it only spoiled them. There ought to be a law made, that every coloured person should be compelled to apprentice his children for three years to the service of some white man. That is what they were made for." Yet this lady belongs to the inner circle of revived religion in the Dutch Reformed Church. In another house I had to sit in meekness under a wild tempest of words in which were set forth the injustice of a Government which assisted the black man to educate his children, whilst the white people could not afford to spare theirs from the work of the farm to go to school: yet these people were land-owners on the northern slope of the Paarl mountain who drove in to church every Sunday with a well set up equipage and a pair of spanking horses. Travelling through the karroo by train some years ago, I was approached by a Dutch Reformed minister who with an incredulous yet deeply serious air inquired if I really believed that these black people had any receptive faculty for divine things, and whether it were any use preaching the gospel to them. I answered him in the spirit of gentleness, for I saw that he meant no harm, and that he was a sincere seeker after truth.

To go back to the Transvaal—that there are many missionary stations there is true enough. The missionary is tolerated and looked down upon as belonging to an inferior order of clerics. He must be discreet, he must teach his flock to be submissive to their superiors and contented with that state of life in which it has pleased Providence to place them. There are some missionary societies to which the air of the Transvaal is unfavourable. These are they who believe that it is right to teach the native that he is a free man, who ought to learn to stand on his own feet, and to become fitted to exercise the rights of a human being, the

door of which should stand open to him. We are justified in believing that what holds good of the Transvaal in such matters would have held good in the Cape Colony also, were it under Boer domination, and not under the rule of Great Britain.

Let those who are contending for what they call the "independence" of the Boer Republics remember the following facts. We cannot ignore the Black man as one of the chief factors in the future of South Africa. On the subject of the Black Man the Boer regime and that of Great Britain are irreconcilable. Two dominant systems so vitally different cannot co-exist side by side. The predominance of the Boer is out of the question, that of Great Britain the only possible alternative.





# THE SOUTH AFRICAN VIGILANCE COMMITTEE.

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Arderne, H. M.	Juta, Hon. Sir H., Q.C., M.L.A.
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# The South African Vigilance Committee.

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The Committee seeks to achieve the following objects :—

- (1) To collect and focus the views of all sections of South African citizens who are convinced of the essential justice of Sir Alfred Milner's policy.
- (2) To set forth to the British public the necessity for the prosecution of the present war to a thoroughly successful termination.
- (3) To make it clear to the citizens of the Empire in the United Kingdom and in the Colonies that the continuance of the Independence of the Republican States in any form must endanger the permanent settlement and peaceful progress of South Africa, and would lead to greater trouble than any we have hitherto experienced.
- (4) To counteract misleading statements made by the anti-British Press or by the emissaries or supporters of the Republics in favour of any settlement short of annexation.
- (5) To organise public demonstrations, at suitable times and in suitable places, in support of the policy for the incorporation of the Republics in the British Empire.
- (6) To supply literature to the various political organisations in the United Kingdom, or elsewhere, and to disseminate information among our Dutch fellow-Colonists as to the aim and scope of British policy.
- (7) To raise a fund to be called the South African Imperial Defence Fund, to be used solely for the promotion of the above object. No portion of the Fund shall be available for contested elections or for any political party purposes in South Africa.